

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This application has been carefully considered in light of the Office Action of November 12, 2004. As a result, A new Abstract of the Disclosure has been submitted and the claims amended to more clearly distinguish the invention with respect to the prior art.

The Examiner has maintained the restriction requirement and has therefore withdrawn claims 9 and 10. In view of the amendment to claim 1, it is requested that claims 9 and 10 now be considered on the merits as depending from an allowable generic claim. Claims 1-8 have been previously elected as being within the species of group I drawn to Figures 1-4 for purposes of the election requirement.

Claims 1-8 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. In this respect, claim 1 has been amended to overcome this grounds for rejection. Therefore, reconsideration of this grounds for rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-8 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being directly anticipated by French Patent FR 2767899 A, hereinafter, the primary reference. The claims have been amended to further emphasize the differences between the present invention and the teachings of the primary reference. Therefore, reconsideration and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

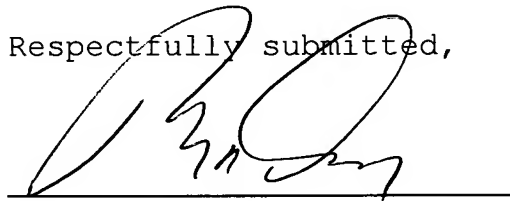
With the present invention, when the male element is connected to the female element, the male element is partially released by applying a force F_2 on the latch 5, this releases the tooth 54 from the member 71 (Figs. 1-4) or member 92 (Figs. 5-7) to move to engage the spaced tooth 55. This slight shift causes fluid pressure in the coupler to force the safety member 8 to be moved within the female element so that the flange 86 thereof engages flange 56 of the latch thereby preventing the latch from being moved to an outer position by the resilient element 6 until the pressure within the coupler reaches a safe pressure to permit the complete separation the male and female elements. When the pressure drops to a safe level, the force of the resilient element 6 will cause the latch to move the safety member to a position to release the latch. This relatively movable safety member is not disclosed in the primary reference.

The ring member 9 referenced in the Office Action is shown as being fixed within the coupler of the primary reference as the

member abuts against a gasket 3 when the male and female members are secured to one another. In the primary reference the ring member 9 actually functions more like the teeth 51 and 52 of the present invention.

In view of the foregoing, the primary reference does not provide a movable safety for preventing the removal of the male element as is taught by the present invention. Therefore, reconsideration of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) is requested and allowance of the claims requested. Should the Examiner have any questions regarding the amendments submitted herewith or the allowability of the claims, it is requested that the Examiner contact the undersigned attorney of record to further expedite the prosecution of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. A. Dowell', is written over a horizontal line.

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